

Animals Signs

Exhibit Hall Activity

Suggested Grade Level: K-2

Skills Practiced

- Observing
- Reporting data

N.C. Science Curriculum Competency Goals

Kindergarten

- 1.02 Similarities and differences in animals
- 3.03 Movement of organisms

Grade 1

- 1.02 Needs of animals
- 1.04 Identify local environments that support the needs of N.C. animals
- 4.01 Way things move

Objective

Students will be able to identify several North Carolina animals and the habitats in which they live.

Background

Animals leave behind all sorts of clues for us to find and interpret. To discover what animals are around and how they spend their time, we look for signs such as tracks, nests, and food remains. By examining tracks, we can determine what animal made them. We can also hypothesize what the animal was doing at the time the tracks were made. Birds and other animals can be identified by the shape, size, and location of their nests and home sites, as well as by the materials used to build the structures. If we come across food remains, we can begin to identify the animal that ate the food by observing what parts of the food were left behind and how and where the food was eaten.

As you and your students explore the habitat dioramas located in the Mountains to the Sea exhibit hall, be on the lookout for North Carolina's animals and their signs.

Materials

- Animals and Their Signs activity sheet
- tape
- scissors
- index cards

Teacher Preparation

1. Determine into how many groups you will divide your class and then make that many copies of an unmarked activity sheet used during the Animals and Their Signs pre-visit activity on page 10.
2. Each group will need a complete set of animal cards when they arrive at the Museum. To make the cards, cut out the animals and their signs from the copies of the activity sheet. Using one index card per animal and its sign, glue or tape the animal on the front of the card and then secure the animal's sign on the back of the card.
Note: If your students are able and there is enough time, have each group make their own set of cards.
3. Bring the animal cards to the Museum.

4. In case your students have difficulty locating the animals, here is a list of the animals and their habitat locations in the exhibit hall:

crayfish	Bottomlands
black bear	Savanna
great blue heron	Bottomlands
beaver	Piedmont
pileated woodpecker	Bottomlands
red squirrel	Spruce-Fir Forest

Activity

1. When you enter the Mountains to the Sea exhibit hall, give each group its animal cards.
2. Instruct the groups to search for the animals and signs while they explore the exhibit hall.
3. When your students finish exploring, discuss the results of the search with them. Did they find all the animals? Where were the animals? What were they doing in the dioramas? Did your students learn any interesting facts about any of the animals?

Extensions

Examine the animal tracks sculpted into the walkways that wind through the habitat dioramas. Do your students see any tracks they recognize?

Each habitat diorama is filled with animals and their signs. Pick a diorama and have your students find as many animals and signs as they can.

During the trip back to your school, have your students look for signs of human activity (e.g., litter, grass clippings).

References and Resources

Books for students

Animal Tracks, by Arthur Dorros
Crinkleroot's Book of Animal Tracking, by Jim Arnosky
How to Be a Nature Detective, by Millicent Selsam
I See Animals Hiding, by Jim Arnosky
Keep Looking!, by Millicent Selsam

Books for teachers

A Guide to Animal Tracking and Behavior, by Donald Stokes
North Carolina Wild Places, edited by Lawrence S. Earley
North Carolina Wild: Wildlife Profile Series, published by the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission